

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

June 28, 2021

President Jonathan Holloway  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
7 College Avenue, 2nd Floor  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Dear President Holloway:

I write to bring to your attention a recent statement from the Executive Board of the Rutgers PTLFC-AAUP-AFT, the union that represents Part-Time Lecturers at the university.

We treasure universities for their commitment to open debate, free expression, and a robust exchange of ideas, while ensuring that our institutions of higher education remain inclusive to and respectful of people of all backgrounds, religions, and nationalities. This is especially important given the rise in hate across the United States, including the recent surge of antisemitic incidents. That is why I was alarmed to see a recent statement signed by members of the Executive Board of the Part-Time Lecturer Chapter of Rutgers AAUP-AFT (Local 6324), which declared that “as teachers and union members, we can no longer allow ourselves to be complicit in the illegal acts of the Israeli government,” accused Israel of “military actions that have targeted, killed and maimed civilian populations” and of upholding “a regime of legalized racial discrimination perpetrated against the Palestinian people.”

To be sure, Rutgers’ part-time lecturers are entitled to hold their own opinions, even those which may be disagreeable. However, it is important to recognize that invective which singles out, disparages, delegitimizes, or demonizes Israel can and in many cases does fall outside of bounds. In addition, in recent months, we have seen American Jews targeted in a series of unacceptable antisemitic attacks. That is why I am deeply concerned for the wellbeing of Rutgers students who identify as Jewish or pro-Israel and who worry that they might face a hostile environment in the classroom or on campus because of such sentiments.

Considering recent events, it is important to send a clear message that all Rutgers students and community members, including those who identify as being Jewish or pro-Israel, will not be singled out, penalized, or made to feel unwelcome at our state’s flagship university. I would ask you to please speak out clearly and quickly against this hate-filled misinformation campaign and rhetoric.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress

Cc: Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO